849 move to catch it, as that will result in a mark of that fruit
784 on the child. It is unwise to throw meat in the direction of the woman, especially liver, because in that case the child will get freckles . . .

845 When the child is born, everything is settled and
754 solved . . . Whether it be a boy or a girl, it is already a great joy and happiness . . . But a little amazement may get mingled with the joy. If the child happens to be born with teeth . . . it is regarded as a wizard. The Hungarian for wizard is «táltos» which also means horse, and now-a-days it is generally used in that sense. The people sense something magic in the fact that a child is born with teeth ; as soon as this child is grown up, the other «táltos» are supposed to come and fetch it, changing it into a cloud . . . In the clouds the «táltos» fight each other, they see hidden treasures, they are very *learned*, they go on horseback, but even their horses are wizards . . .

754 In 1725 a woman suspected of sorcery was asked from whom she had acquired her knowledge of doctoring and healing ; when, where and how she had learnt it? The woman said that she was a «táltos» ; she had been born with two teeth. «Did you teach other people to become «táltos»? can you tell me what power and what duties the «táltos» have?» — «They fight each other in the sky for empire», the woman replied. «How did you get there? On foot or otherwise?» In reply she explained that God took her under his wings, or gave her wings as he gives them to the birds.

Even in 1801 a man from the Great Plain declares, that he is a «táltos», that he sees the treasures of the earth. He rolls his «evil» eyes in an amazing fashion, he has a glib tongue, elaborates his speech with songs and he has a remarkable gift for reciting Hungarian poems.

Long before these two cases, a Hungarian from the great plain is accused of singing devilish songs, of lighting

pagan fires, and with them begging the help of the Prince of Darkness . . . 754 •

But it is much better if the child is born without teeth and without such great knowledge, because what good is it to the poor mother if her dear child suddenly disappears into the air ! . . . She did not give birth to him amidst frightful pain in order that, instead of working with spades and hoes, he should fly about in the clouds, fight up there and perhaps send hail on the seeds to the despair of their poor Hungarian owners . . . 000

Rather let him become a normal child, go to school, be a scholar, a strippling, a youth, a lad, and what a lad ! Let him be called up as a soldier, eat soldier's bread for a time, be discharged and then, when the time has come, look round for a wife ; let him get engaged, married, have children, get a bent back and prepare for death : then his horse shall stop, put down its load, finish, give back the key, and he shall move to the bosom of Abraham, like any ordinary mortal . . . That is the fate of man, not to become a wizard . . .

The little heathen must be taken to the priest, that his godmother may come back with the news : «Out we took a heathen, back we brought a Christian» ; or «We fetched a wolf, we returned a lamb . . .» 851

The little Paloc is carried off ; his mother lies hidden from the world in a *tent-like couch*, that is to say her bed is surrounded by embroidered sheets, as though in her condition — in the manner of the primitive people — she has to be separated from the other members of her family . . . While the family is away with the newborn, it is wise to put an axe, a drill or some other useful implement into the mother's bed, so that the boy shall become a good worker. If it be a girl, then it has to be a spindle, or a distaff so that she shall become a good spinner. But before the babe is [846]

[i.e. the newly born baby -- Analyst]

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789 Sometimes the friendly appeal and the threat of consequences in case of unrightous behaviour follow each other in the lines of a verse :

If you have a drink from it,
May it become you well ;
If you steal my flask,
May you break your neck.

Some of the flasks are made in the shape of a cross or prayer book. A squat, earthenware «book» explains its origin in the following line :

This is the daily devotion of Joseph Papdi.

This kind of pagan epigram sounds very much like blasphemy. But if we ask the profane Hungarian carefully whether he is not ashamed of the horrible words with which in his bitterness he curses heaven and earth, he reassures us with absolute conviction :

— «It does not go to the same place as our prayers!»

## Superstitions of Saint Lucia's day

796 December the 13th, Saint Lucia's day, is the day popularly dedicated to a whole collection of superstitions. It is 12 days before Christmas, and thus precedes the feast by the same number of days as Christmas in the Gregorian Calendar precedes the Christmas of the ancient calendar. The popular name of this space of time is Saint Lucia's calendar, and the majority of the customs and superstitions of the winter solstice have crowded together on this one day, as the witches do on Sylvester's night on Saint Gregory's hill in Buda...

754 Speaking of witches, we should like to add that it is
789 just on this unfortunate 13th, Saint Lucia's day, that we can, if we wish, see witches face to face... If anyone

wants to see them in Hungary, let him follow the local custom ... To this end we must carve a small milking stool, just big enough for one person to stand on. The carving must be begun on Saint Lucia's day, and every day we must do a little more. It must be finished on Christmas day. The stool must be made of nine kinds of wood, or better still, of thirteen odd bits of wood ... It must have four legs, a top and two wedges to secure each leg, making thirteen pieces in all; the same number as the date of Saint Lucia's day; — the thirteenth day reckoned from the one which dawns after the last day in Saint Lucia's calendar ... — If we are working on it in the evenings, and an unknown voice says: — «You work thus if you want to master it!» — we must not answer but merely go on calmly with our task. It is a long job, but well worth it ... Even a Hungarian proverb has it that: «It is made as slowly as Saint Lucia's stool.» When the stool is ready, it is advisable to put on our waistcoat inside out, and make a knot in our tie or scarf. If, having thus put everything in order, we go to the midnight mass at Christmas, draw a circle round ourselves with chalk, and stand on top of the stool at the consecration of the Host ... lo! we can see all the witches one by one! They leap around the priest all naked; they curse and spit; some of them have horns, others moustaches, a few wear a milking pail on their heads ... They all turn their heads away from the Sacrament with horror ... But as soon as we have seen and recognized them, we must run! We must pull the stool to bits, and rush home at full speed! It is wise to throw poppy and caraway seeds behind us for the witches following us to pick up. For these they even give up the chase! Having reached home we had better throw the stool straight into the fire, so that it may burn without leaving a trace!

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754 789 It is a good thing to know the witches, so that we shall also know which bad soul of the village takes away the milk of the cow and causes other sterility . . . Because, with chickens for instance, there is also much trouble at this time of year: it is already Christmas, and they do not even think of beginning to lay eggs. But there are remedies even for that. It is wise to know them, especially those of Saint Lucia's day. These rules, which count as remedies, are the following: — we must not sew on Saint Lucia's day, — we must not spend money, — in the evening we must frighten the fowls with a piece of wood, — the mistress of the house must drive the hens off their roost in the hen-coop with a broom held in her left hand; we must shake the scovel over the hen-coop; — on this day we must sleep on maize and throw this same maize to the hens; — we must steal a little wheat from the mill for the hens, — we must feed the hens from a sieve. One or two of these precautions must prove effective, especially if, while doing it, we murmur some traditional spell, for instance: — «Our hen shall lay eggs, that of our two neighbours shall only cackle; my hen shall lay and lay, the neighbour's hen shall cackle and cackle; — hens, hens, you shall lay and cackle, lay and cackle; I also shall cackle, you also shall cackle, hens, hens, lay eggs! — My hen, you shall lay eggs, the hens of the others shall only cackle!»

These are the most effective things we can do on Saint Lucia's day, but if for some reason we do not have complete faith in them, then we must welcome the «kotyolók». (cacklers) These are the later descendants of our ancient sorcerers who conjure up fertility.

They bring under their arms straw or a log of wood, put it down onto the doorstep, or more often in the room just behind the door, and then they start their magic cant:

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Lucia, Lucia, cackle, cackle,
Their hens and their geese shall lay eggs,
Their cows shall give plenty of milk,
Lucia, Lucia, cackle, cackle . . .

They shall have as many eggs
As there are stars in the sky,
They shall have as many chickens
As there are stones in the gravel,
Lucia, Lucia, cackle, cackle . . .

They wish for other earthly blessings as well, especially for fertility:

Their axe, their driller shall stand in its helve
Like a young tree, straight and erect,
Lucia, Lucia, cackle, cackle . . .

While the children, even grown lads, sing with the «kotyolók», the mistress of the house sprinkles their heads with water, dropping it through a sieve, or throws maize on their heads. The «kotyolók» leave the straw or the log behind, but they steal some more in the courtyard for the magic which is to be performed in the neighbourhood. The mistress of the house puts the straw under the hens, and gives them the maize. The kotyolók go about at dawn, because should a woman visitor call before them, their efforts would be vain . . .

It is unwise to drive away these sorcerers, because they then use their power the other way round. And these spells in the opposite sense are just as forceful as the real one:

Lucia, Lucia, cackle, cackle,
They shall only have one chicken
And even that one shall be blind!

But if they are received in a friendly way, and are even placated with the traditional dry pears, then we may be certain that: — «Our hen shall lay eggs and also cackle, but yours shall only cackle . . .»